

## TH Activity Plan – Inspiration: Calendars with Plant Artwork

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**ACTIVITY DESCRIPTION:** Participants will do one or more plant activity based on inspiration from calendars that feature plant artwork or photos.

### THERAPEUTIC GOALS:

**Cognitive/Intellectual:** Practice relational functioning with peers; develop flexible thinking skills

**Physical:** Lengthen time & attention to task; practice self-regulation

**Psychological/Emotional:** Practice patience; expand social emotional learning & conscious discipline strategies

**Sensory:** Expand tolerance of sensory inputs (water, paint)

**Social:** Practice cooperative group behavior; recognize social cues from others; respond appropriately to cues; listen patiently to others

### STEP-BY-STEP PROCESS:

1. **Pre-Session Preparation:** Gather artwork or photos of plants from calendars. Laminate samples. Gather all other materials.
2. Facilitator begins session by circulating calendar pages with artwork or photos of plants. The group practices appropriate behavior passing pages to one another cooperatively, recognizing when people are ready to receive them etc. Facilitator can suggest cues for social emotional learning: watch for appropriate responses if pages are dropped, pass items in a non-aggressive manner, give time for others to view pages etc.
3. Facilitator asks questions to engage participants like: Is this artwork realistic & does the flower really look like this? Is this an artist's interpretation of a flower? Does this shade of pink really exist in nature? Again, focusing on social interactions within the group, facilitator can suggest appropriate behavior like taking turns responding, refraining from shouting out, listening quietly to others.
4. Facilitator suggests 2 plant activities related to calendar artwork, letting the group decide which one will be done in this TH session. Explaining how group decision-making will be handled, using consensus as a means of deciding what activity will be done, talking briefly about reaching group consensus, accepting decisions of group, being positive about decision can help participants practice positive social behavior.
5. Two activities are described: painting plants from real specimens or from calendar artwork **OR** [matching calendar artwork to live plants](#). Group discusses & votes on which activity they prefer. Participants practice accepting majority vote.
6. Hands-on activity begins. Optional: Session can conclude by going outdoors for garden walk to look for plants from calendar artwork. Non-selected activity can be done in subsequent sessions.

### Materials

Calendar pages with plant art/photos

Live plants similar to calendar art, paints, paper, brushes, water, paper towel

Wipes

**APPLICATIONS FOR POPULATIONS:** The focus of this TH session is on promoting and supporting social interactions within a group setting. Using plant activities where participants share calendar pages, pass them around cooperatively, and then vote on which plant activity to undertake can provide practice for social dynamics, receiving social cues from facilitator and group members, group decision-making, acceptance of decisions other than the ones the individual might like, and understanding the process of group decision-making. For some populations this may be an early introduction to group decision-making: children, and people with intellectual disabilities. For others, the session can provide practice in self-regulation, tolerance of others, and accepting others wishes. Most populations can benefit from practicing social interactions, group dynamics and appropriate responses to social cues. These skills would be used in classroom settings and throughout the lifespan.

**SAFETY CONSIDERATIONS:** Facilitators are responsible for knowing poisonous and toxic plants and plant parts. Select plants that are not poisonous. Use non-toxic paint.

**NOTES OR OTHER CONSIDERATIONS:** Calendar art has a long history of using plants and plant illustrations both realistic and abstract. This would include edible plants. For example, Canadian landscape artists [Group of Seven](#), Anna Sipkema's 1904 calendar sheet with flowers and vines, [medieval calendars with plant borders](#), and botanical art by Kristen Johns. Nature-inspired art calendars expand this with artists like [Noelle Phares](#), and [National Parks calendar art by Erin Vaughan](#).

Plants that are seen in calendar art and which will be available as live plants include: daffodils, tulips, peonies, daisies, roses, tropical plants, wildflowers, dahlias, and vintage botanicals.



#### REFERENCES/ RESOURCES:

Bovey, T., & Strain, P. (n.d.). [Promoting positive peer social interactions](#). Center on the Social and Emotional Foundations of Early Learning.  
Conscious Discipline. (n.d.). Conscious discipline methodology.  
Quality Behavior Solutions. (2021). [A comprehensive guide to what social skills groups are](#).  
Williamson, B. (n.d.). [Teaching responsible decision making skills](#). Everfil.com.

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TH Activity Plan form developed by Lesley Fleming, Susan Morgan and Kathy Brechner (2012), revised in 2024.